



ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne 3000

21 August 2018

Statement of Grounds 340-342 High Street Northcote/VCAT Ref P1435/2018

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria is deeply concerned by this proposed development. We agree with and strongly support the thrust of the Recommendation in Delegates' Report, City of Darebin (Application for Planning Permit D/186/2018, 340 & 342 High Street, Northcote 3070):

- (1) The proposed building height, scale, bulk and proposed setbacks would unreasonably impact the vitality of the Northcote Activity Centre and public realm amenity having regard to:*
- (a) The State and Local Planning Policy frameworks, including Clause 15.01 (Urban Environment) and Clause 21.03 (Housing);*
 - (b) The design objectives, design requirements and precinct requirements of the Design and Development Overlay – Schedule 14 and*
 - (c) The Northcote Activity Centre Structure Plan, April 2007.*
- (2) The design does not respect the heritage character, the existing heritage buildings or the area by way of excessive height and bulk and insufficient setbacks and design contrary to the decision guidelines of Clause 43.01 of the Darebin Planning Scheme.*

The new building on the site should not exceed the four-storey maximum limit imposed by DDO 14 in the Central Northcote precinct. This is a large site with plenty of room to retain the main bank building itself with ample scope for significant development to occur at the rear, allowing a sufficient set back to ensure that the facade is not crushed visually by the bulk of new building.

As it stands, the proposed apartments on the High Street frontage are set back only 3.7 metres from the façade of the bank and will be clearly visible from the street as the sight line diagrams show. It is then obvious to the viewer that the bank has become just a façade at its upper level. This is inappropriate for a building of this importance.

With sufficient set back, the whole of the main bank building could and should be retained. Its interior, although not yet considered for inclusion in the HO, is outstanding (see interior photos from 2010 sale (<https://www.realestate.com.au/property/342-high-st-northcote-vic-3070>)). We urge that consideration be given to retaining these interiors as features in any development. With ample room for new structures behind the existing heritage building, these features could be used imaginatively for common or commercial space or for a high end residence.

At the very least, the height of the new development should be reduced to four stories as required under the planning scheme and the existing main bank building should be retained as far back as the principal front roof of the two hipped roofs extends.

(Professor) Charles Sowerwine, Chair, Heritage Committee, RHSV